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NEW DIRECTIONS

A PLAN FOR ENHANCED PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES FOR THE MOBILITY DISADVANTAGED

Commissioner T.R. Jakobek
Toronto Transit Commission
May 1987

INTRODUCTION

Almost since the inception of Wheel-Trans there has been an ongoing debate regarding the use of a private contractor to operate the service. Both the Commission and Metro Council have received many deputations on this aspect of the service over the years. Additionally, there have been complaints regarding the level of service provided and to a certain extent the eligibility criteria used in determining those residents of Metro who can utilize this specialized door-to-door service.

In the recent past the staff have indicated to the Commission that the cost of operating the Wheel-Trans service directly by TTC employees would require additional operating funds. As well, capital expenditures would be necessary in order to build a facility that would accommodate the Wheel-Trans operation.

The Commission and its staff have generally felt that any additional monies available to operate the Wheel-Trans service should be utilized for additional service as opposed to a TTC takeover. However, over the long term I believe most individuals involved with the Wheel-Trans service have held the opinion that it would eventually be operated entirely by TTC. This, perhaps, because it is difficult to have such an essential service operated by the private sector while maintaining the necessary political and management control and assuring continuity of service.

The levels of service and the constraints placed upon eligible riders by eligibility criteria are determined by funds available both from the Metropolitan Corporation and the Provincial Government. At the moment the 50% special subsidy for physically disabled services from the Province is only available if the registrants meet the Provincial guidelines for ridership which are those persons unable to board conventional transit systems. This issue is one that has been discussed in the past by the MTC and it is noted that the recent Provincial Government's Throne Speech has made reference to eligibility criteria for such transit services.

With a rapidly aging population and a greater public expectation for the delivery of this service, Metro will face considerable pressure to expand the criteria for eligibility and improve the

services operated by Wheel-Trans. Clearly, therefore, there are some very serious issues that must be resolved within the next few years.

This report will hopefully set a new direction for the Commission by making a series of recommendations that will move our community towards an enhanced public transit service for the mobility disadvantaged.

WHEEL-TRANS SYSTEM HISTORY

In 1973, the Metropolitan Toronto Social Services and Housing Committee requested the Toronto Transit Commission to participate in the development of a public transportation service for the disabled. Commission staff, Metro officials and citizen members of the Technical Committee on Transportation formulated a plan for a pilot project to serve persons unable to board conventional public transit.

The project began in 1975; it involved the transportation of 46 riders with seven converted vans for "work" trips only (Subscription Service). The service was expanded in 1977 to include any trip purpose, 12 hours per day, five days a week. Funding was shared equally by the Province of Ontario and the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

On April 24, 1979, Metro Council established a Wheel-Trans Advisory Committee comprised of disabled representatives from each of the area Municipalities, Metro's Social Services and Planning Departments and Commission staff. The role of the Advisory Committee was to advise on policies with respect to Wheel-Trans service delivery and on any issues that would affect the rider.

Recommendations made by the Advisory Committee were subject to the approval of the Metropolitan Transportation Committee and Metro Council. The operation and management of the service was the responsibility of the Commission in accordance with the policies and guidelines which were set by the Advisory Committee.

In 1978, a taxi company was contracted to provide service during weekday peak periods, for ambulatory passengers only. The taxi service grew from eight vehicles initially to 21 by February 1984. Over the years, the Wheel-Trans service has been expanded to include evenings, weekends and holidays. The Wheel-Trans fleet has increased from seven converted vans initially to a projected 140 vehicles at the end of the current contract in late 1988.

In January 1981, the Commission hired an Administrator to be responsible for the Wheel-Trans operation. In 1982, a decision was made to have Commission staff become directly responsible for Wheel-Trans reservations, scheduling and dispatching functions. This recommendation was approved by Metropolitan Council in May 1982, and implemented on May 1, 1983.

In 1984, all operating vehicles came under one contractor and the taxis were replaced by station wagons. This step provided a more cost effective operation given that the taxi operation had been costed on the basis of distance, therefore, each additional rider scheduled increased the costs. The station wagon operation was and continues to be provided on the basis of a fixed cost per vehicle hour with a greater rider capacity.

The original Wheel-Trans Advisory Committee initially established has been reorganized and is now known as the Wheel-Trans Community Committee. This Committee is comprised of disabled representatives from each of the area municipalities who are riders of the system. They report through their Chairman, Alderman David Lacey, to the Commission.

The Committee's mandate is to provide advice on the general operation of the service and to be the final authority on deciding whether or not applicants for service that are referred by staff, are in fact, eligible.

Several other technical advances have been made that were designed to improve the efficiency of the system and or the quality of the service. For example, with the growth of registrants and therefore demand for service, the Commission began a demonstration project to introduce a computer aided reservations, scheduling and dispatch system.

This project was in co-operation with the Province of Ontario who provided 100% funding for the purchase of the hardware and software. This project began in October 1984 and has proven to be a valuable tool, improving the speed of the scheduling process and allowing for a more spontaneous service through the reduction of the call-in time from seven to four days. It will also provide quicker response time for same day demand response requests.

In March 1986, the Commission introduced 30 new ORION II buses to replace a similar number of retiring mini-buses. The ORION II offers several technological advances, including a low floor construction and a kneeling feature to eliminate the need for a lift, forward facing seating, low noise, improved visibility and superior ride features.

Description of Wheel-Trans Service

The regular Wheel-Trans service is available within the Metropolitan Toronto area Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 12:00 midnight, and Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight. The fare charged is equivalent to one regular Commission full adult fare.

Wheel-Trans offers a wide variety of service options. They are subscription, advance reservation, demand response, and special services.

Subscription: This service is for work or post secondary education trips. Passengers wishing to travel to and from the same destination four to five days a week, from Monday to Friday, during the peak hours, are eligible for this service. Assuming that space on vehicles is available, the trips are pre-scheduled and the vehicle will be there to pick up the rider at the same time each day of travel. Payment for Subscription service is paid monthly, in advance, based on the cost of an adult fare for each of the two trips per day, five days a week.

Advance Reservation: Advance service is used for casual trips, such as shopping, medical appointments, visiting, etc. Reservations are accepted up to seven days in advance. (In May 1987, the seven days will be shortened to four days.)

Demand Response: This service is offered to riders who need a ride on the same day they call in. The request will only be accommodated if there is space available on that day's schedule.

Special Services: On a special request basis, Wheel-Trans may also arrange for group or charter services. Service is operated in addition to the regular Wheel-Trans operation and is based on vehicle availability from the contractor.

Service is operated to and from accessible building entrances only. Drivers will assist patrons to and from the vehicle where necessary and through doors with no more than one step.

All same day requests or same day cancellations are handled through the Dispatch control centre.

If a person wishes to travel beyond the Metropolitan Toronto boundaries, Wheel-Trans has arranged transfer points on the boundary lines. Service is provided to these points to co-ordinate with services from the regions or municipalities of Peel, Vaughan, Markham, and Pickering.

Eligibility Issues

The following discusses the eligibility issues in relation to the projected demand for Wheel-Trans. As our society grows older, there seems to be little doubt that the Commission must react in a positive way to the many special transit needs that go with age and disability. Since 1975 when the Wheel-Trans service was initiated as a demonstration program, the ridership has climbed steadily so that in 1987, it is estimated that the service will have a ridership of approximately 606,000 passengers.

In order for someone to become registered for the Wheel-Trans service, they must meet certain eligibility criteria as set by the Province and administered by Wheel-Trans staff and the Wheel-Trans Community Committee. While Metropolitan Toronto has the freedom to expand the eligibility criteria, the Province will not provide operating subsidies for other than individuals unable to board conventional transit. For those eligible riders that are carried by Wheel-Trans, the Province provides a 50% subsidy of operating costs.

Wheel-Trans currently has approximately 17,000 registered riders who meet the existing criteria. Although most Provinces have some form of elibibility criteria for their specialized door-to-door services, there has been considerable public and political pressure for an easing of the criteria.

There is a substantial group of disabled individuals who are technically capable of boarding a regular transit vehicle, however, they are incapable of using it. In some cases, they are unable to walk to the nearest transit stop, but in many cases because their particular condition prevents them riding the regular system. Many of this group are the frail elderly.

Unlike those who are currently eligible for Wheel-Trans, many of the above are confined to their homes, particularly during inclement weather.

The problem of this "second tier" of disabled is growing and there is no doubt that there will be continued pressure on the Commission to find effective, cost efficient methods of delivering Public Transit services to this segment of Metro's population.

Financial Issues

Metropolitan Toronto claims a 50% operating subsidy from the Province under their Physically Disabled transit program. However, due to the nature of the service and the relatively low volume of ridership compared to conventional services, the Wheel-Trans farebox only covers approximately 4% of the operating costs compared to 68% on the conventional service.

In 1983, the Province introduced a new subsidy formula that was designed to provide an incentive to specialized transit operations to be more efficient by linking part of their subsidy to the productivity of the service.

Although this new formula was beneficial to some of the services in Ontario, it was potentially a negative for Metro due to the large geographic area served, along with the longer trip lengths and traffic congestion experienced during peak periods. All these conditions serve to limit the ability of the Wheel-Trans service to achieve higher levels of productivity (i.e., the number of riders carried per vehicle hour operated).

Even though the Province has insisted that the new formula be applied equally throughout Ontario and expects Metropolitan Toronto to apply it to the Wheel-Trans service, the Commission has insisted that the previous subsidy policy of equally sharing the costs remain.

It should be noted that since the introduction of this new formula, the Province has made various adjustments for trip length and Orion II bus purchases that result in a 50/50 sharing with Metro. The special subsidy for the vehicle purchases will however, end by 1990 and Metro may have to rely on the basic formula.

We should therefore begin discussions with the Province of Ontario to establish a special subsidy formula for Metro, a formula that would guarantee a minimum Provincial subsidy of 50%.

Fare Equity

Currently, all Wheel-Trans riders pay the equivalent of a full adult fare. This means that senior citizens, students, and children travelling on Wheel-Trans are paying a higher fare on Wheel-Trans than they would pay if they were to travel on the conventional T.T.C. system.

Since 58% of all Wheel-Trans registrants and 46% of riders are over 65, this creates an inequitable fare structure for the majority of the Wheel-Trans customers. Although one might say that the door-to-door nature of the service justifies a higher fare structure, this "double" fare is not present for the adults under 65 and therefore, presents an inconsistency in Commission fare pricing policy.

CONTRACT ISSUES BACKGROUND

Contracting out of specific projects, ongoing services, or specialized functions is not new to the transit industry. In Canada approximately one third of the 300 systems supplying specialized services for the mobility disabled are privately operated.

There are two main reasons why Wheel-Trans has utilized private contractors.

Since 1975, the Wheel-Trans service has been evolving and maturing. Initially, the future extent and scope of the service was unknown, the type of service to be offered was specialized and while the TTC had experience with Dial-A-Bus operations it had no experience with disabled persons. Consequently, it was a logical decision to contract out the service to a private contractor. However, in May 1983, the TTC assumed control of all reservations, scheduling and dispatching functions thereby becoming the interface between the rider and the contractor. Knowledge required for the Wheel- Trans system has now been acquired by Commission staff.

The second major rationale was financial considerations, i.e., the economics. Private contractors were able to operate the service at a cost lower than the TTC, due in part to lower wages and less restrictive working conditions.

For the purposes of this report I have reviewed the costs comparison contained in previous Commission reports.

As can be seen from the financial summary in Appendix A, the comparable cost of operation by the TTC is $16,320,000 per year or approximately $623,200 more than the current contracted operation.

Although this operating cost differential is relatively small, to have the TTC integrate the contracted portion of the Wheel-Trans service, it would be necessary to construct a Wheel-Trans garage and provide a radio communications system at an estimated cost of $25,560,000 (excluding land costs). Annualizing the cost of this capital investment would result in annual costs of $2,661,000 per year.

Wheel-Trans Service Integration

There are a number of factors involved in the decision to integrate Wheel-Trans functions into the T.T.C. A discussion of these issues follows.

1. Extension of the Contract

The T.T.C.'s existing contract with All-Way Transportation will expire on October 31, 1988. Given that approval to assume operation is received by June 30, 1987, then an extended period beyond the expiry date of the current contract will be needed to have garage facilities available. This will require a contract extension which will have to be negotiated between Commission staff and the contractor.

To protect Metro and the Commission's investment in its fleet, during the remaining life of the contract and its extension, increased monitoring of vehicle maintenance is required. This can be achieved by the addition of one employee to Equipment Department's current strength and this will be recommended.

2. Operating Facilities

There are several alternatives to providing a facility for Wheel-Trans vehicles. These options are:

(a) construct a temporary building to house the service facilities and office requirements while constructing a permanent facility;

(b) store and maintain vehicles at other TTC or GCL garages where excess capacity may now exist until a permanent facility is constructed; or

(c) build a permanent operating garage utilizing the pre-engineered design that has been developed for the Arrow Road bus garage.

The first option is for the provision of temporary facilities until a permanent garage is constructed and is not recommended by staff. This alternative would satisfy the requirements for servicing and offices on a temporary basis but would cost $6,000,000.00. Alternative (b), storing and maintaining vehicles at present TTC or GCL garages, is not possible due to either capacity constraints or because of logistic problems regarding vehicle shuttling would be anticipated. In any of these cases, the cost incurred would not have any benefit in the long run.

Metro-owned land reserved for transit purposes is available in Downsview at Sheppard Avenue and Allen Road. This is a very good location for a permanent facility, convenient to Highway 401, and six hectares can be designated for a Wheel-Trans garage. Metro must be requested to release this land for a Wheel-Trans facility.

The construction of a permanent facility can be compressed into a shorter time frame than normal by locking into the existing design for the Arrow Road bus garage. With minor modifications, this design can be made operationally acceptable for Wheel-Trans purposes, thus saving 12 to 15 months of engineering time.

In order to implement this option, a number of approvals will be required. These approvals involved North York, Metro and the Province of Ontario. A prompt confirmation of the following approvals will be required:

(a) project and funding approval by Metro and MTC:

(b) environmental assessment approval or an exemption under the Environmental Assessment Act;

(c) zoning and site plan approval under the Planning Act; and

(d) building permit approval.

On the basis that the above approvals can be secured by October of this year, an anticipated completion date is June 1989, at an estimated total cost of approximately $25 million. If the garage is constructed in two phases, the cost increases to $27 million (Phase I - $18.7 million, Phase II - $8.3 million).

3. Financial and Subsidy Issues

There is a need to formalize and stabilize subsidy arrangements with the Province to ensure continued funding. The Provincial physically disabled subsidy of 50% was developed on the basis that most systems privatize their specialized services, therefore, separate operating and capital funds were unnecessary. It is essential to establish, through discussions with the Province, the availability of a 75% subsidy for capital expenditures for an operating facility and to determine the status of ongoing operating funds.

At present, approximately 4% of gross costs are met through the farebox, the remainder being funded equally by the Province and Metro. However, the Province introduced a new complex subsidy formula for Wheel-Trans type services, based partly on a subsidy per trip operated. The Commission has maintained that this new formula is not appropriate for Metro, and that the Province should guarantee payment of 50% of the deficit. In fact, while the Province has paid 50% of the deficit since 1984, they have also insisted that the new formula be used. To date, a long term solution to this issue remains outstanding.

TACIA - Technical Advisory Committee on Improved Accessibility

The Commission has always recognized that a comprehensive assessment of improved accessibility on conventional services is necessary for the ambulatory disabled and elderly. Consequently, the Commission established the Technical Advisory Committee on Improved Accessibility (TACIA) in 1979.

The committee's mandate was to develop a program to improve accessibility to the surface and subway services and facilities for the ambulatory disabled and elderly who could or do use conventional Commission services but experience some problems or inconvenience.

The terms of reference established for TACIA are as follows:

- review the design of various facilities to improve the mobility of the ambulatory disabled, elderly, infirm, etc., with the understanding that full accessibility is not being contemplated;
- consult with members of the disabled community, designers, architects, and others, to develop a strategy which would improve accessibility;
- prepare cost estimates for recommended alterations and installations to the transit system for consideration by the Commission and its financial partners; and
- develop evaluation criteria which would enable the recommended changes to be prioritized and considered for inclusion in the appropriate capital budgets.

A number of projects were identified and approved for implementation by the Commission. However, others which were more costly such as audio/visual stop announcements, were not implemented.

It should be noted that the Commission is planning to upgrade the subway car and subway station public address system over the next four years, to improve its sound quality. The estimated costs for upgrading the system on the subway cars is $1.4 million with an additional $1.2 million currently included in the Capital Works budget.

It is opportune that the Commission consider the installation of the audio/visual stop announcement system, previously tested by TACIA, for installation in subway vehicles at this timeframe. Appendix C contains the previous staff report on this system which is now estimated to cost in the range of $4 to $5 million.

Improved Accessibility of Bloor/Yonge Station

During the work carried out by TACIA, noted above, certain groups such as the Heart Foundation indicated that the installation of elevators would be beneficial to ambulatory passengers with certain disabilities. In view of the cost of such devices, however, the TACIA Committee did not recommend such a retrofit program. Recently, the Commission received deputations with regard to the possibility of Bloor/Yonge Station being made more accessible.

Renovation of Bloor/Yonge Station as part of the Station Modernization Program was approved at the Commission meeting of January 27, 1987, and subsequently by Metro Council and the work is scheduled to be undertaken in three separate contracts in each of 1988, 1989, and 1990.

Subsequent to the above deputation, staff submitted a report on improved accessibility of Bloor-Yonge Station at the Commission meeting of March 24, 1987, which was tabled by the Commission, and is attached as Appendix B.

Bloor/Yonge Station is the main transfer point between the Yonge-University-Spadina and Bloor-Danforth lines. Since major station renovations are now in the design stage and have project approval, the timing is appropriate to consider modifications that would improve accessibility at this station for the mobility disadvantaged passengers such as the frail, elderly, passengers with baby strollers, etc., by including ramps or other devices. It is important that the design of this station not preclude other enhancements that could be introduced at a later date.

Comparison of Annual Cost of Operation
Estimated 1987 Costs

Operating Costs	TTC	All-Way	Difference
Vehicle Operation & Maintenance	$13,490,202(1)	$12,749,000(2)	$ 741,202
Wheel-Trans Dept. (Reservation & Scheduling)	2,830,000	2,948,000	(118,000)(3)
Sub-Total	$16,320,202	$15,697,000	$ 623,202
Amortization of Capital Costs			
Building ($24,780,000 - 40 years)	$ 2,533,988	-	$2,533,988
Building Equipment & Radio ($780,000 - 10 years)	126,941	-	126,941
Total Costs	$18,981,131	$15,697,000	$3,284,131

(1) Includes:

- TTC owned bus fleet consists of Orion II's
- 200 Operators
- 19 Other Wheel-Trans staff
- Applicable Plant expenses
- 40 hourly rated Equipment employees
- 5½ salaried Equipment employees
- Appropriate licences, Fuel, Insurance, Taxes and additional Administration Fee
- Start-up Expenses. (Stores Inventory, Training, Uniforms)

(2) Includes:

- Contracted hourly rate
  (includes contractor's costs, profit, amortization of capital investment)

(3) Includes:

- Cost of renting existing administrative offices at 1910 Yonge St.

August 11, 1986
1-84-3

Form 801/40/May 82

APPENDIX B

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING DATE MARCH 24, 1987

DATE March 18, 1987 REPORT NO. 13

SUBJECT STATION MODERNIZATION PROGRAMME - ACCESSIBILITY OF BLOOR-YONGE SUBWAY STATION

THE COMMISSION AGREED TO TABLE THE FOREGOING REPORT PENDING COMPLETION OF THE STUDY ON THE WHEEL-TRANS OPERATION BEING UNDERTAKEN BY COMMISSIONER T.R. JAKOBEK.

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING DATE March 24, 1987

DATE March 18, 1987 REPORT NO. 13

SUBJECT STATION MODERNIZATION PROGRAMME - ACCESSIBILITY OF BLOOR-YONGE SUBWAY STATION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission receive the following report for information.

(A.H.S.)(D.J.M.)(J.H.J.)

HISTORY

At its meeting on February 24, 1987, the Commission received deputations from Ms. A. Musgrave, Trans-Action Coalition, Ms. M. Reid, Chairperson - Toronto Mayor's Committee on Aging, and Alderman D. Martin with regard to the possibility of the Bloor-Yonge Subway Station being made accessible for the handicapped. This matter was referred to the General Manager - Engineering and Construction for a report.

DISCUSSION

Design engineering for the first phase of the Bloor-Yonge Station renovation is now well underway and this includes the provision of a new entrance to Bloor-Yonge Station on the east side of Yonge Street, north of Bloor Street. Plans for the entrance call for automatic fare collection and a stairway and escalator side by side for the use of up to 12,000 passengers who are estimated to use the entrance daily. The primary purpose of this entrance is to provide a means of egress to and from the Bloor subway for passengers shopping or working in the catchment area of this station. The proposed facility is shown in drawing 035-A-285.

The initial request for full accessibility to this station focused on this proposed new entrance; however, in reviewing the issue of accessibility to this central subway station, an alternative focusing on the main entrance was also examined together with the question of full accessibility for passengers transferring from one subway to the other.

These opportunities for elevator facilities that will provide full accessibility have been compared on an advantage/disadvantage basis on Table "A" and are indicated on the following drawings:

1. Yonge Street Entrance to provide accessibility from street level to the Bloor Subway platform via elevators - 035-A-293.

2. Main Entrance to provide accessibility from street level to the Yonge Subway platform via elevators - 035-A-294.

3. Subway Transfer to provide accessibility from subway to subway via elevators - 035-A-295.

For the convenience of the Commission, also attached is drawing 035-A-292, which is a key plan of the Yonge-Bloor Subway interchange.

JUSTIFICATION

The foregoing information was requested by the Commission. The opportunities indicated in this report provide for elevators to all levels of Yonge-Bloor Station only.

8-125-85

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Attach:

TABLE "A"

OPPORTUNITY	DRAWING NO.	ADVANTAGE	DISADVANTAGE	COST
1) Yonge St. East East Side Connection to Bloor-Danforth Subway.	035-A-293	Work not yet started, and therefore could be added to our contract requirements.	Connection to Yonge Subway is inconvenient and impractical; necessitates travel of virtually the full length of platform under very crowded conditions. Elevator on unpaid side of Automatic Fare Collection equipment. Special fare collection facilities required. Installation of Elevator or provision for a future installation requires deletion of escalator from present plans. (18 foot rise)	Rough In = $1,300,000. Finish = $ 700,000. Total = $2,000,000.
2) Main Entrance Connection to Yonge Subway	035-A-294	Can be provided for without physically changing the structures at this time. Minimal interference with other subway passengers. Relatively convenient transfer from Yonge Subway to Bloor-Danforth is possible.	Requires co-operation of building owners to make the building entrance accessible. This could add approx. $100,000.00.	Rough In = $1,800,000. Finish = $ 700,000. Total = $2,500,000.
3) Accessibility from Subway to Subway.	035-A-295	Elevator location is off northbound platform and does not interfere with passenger movements.	Elevator location on southbound Yonge platform creates some obstruction to other passengers.	Rough In = $ 500,000. Finish = $ 500,000. Total = $1,000,000.

NOTE: Full accessibility requires either opportunities 1 and 3 or 2 and 3.

Appendix C

Form 801740/May 82

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING DATE May 1, 1984

DATE April 25, 1984 REPORT NO. 9

SUBJECT TEST PROJECT - SUBWAY TRAIN P.A. SYSTEM AND AUTOMATIC STOP ANNOUNCEMENTS

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission receive this report for information and authorize staff to place the Subway Train Automatic Stop Announcement System "on hold" for consideration at a later date.

(A.H.S.) (L.G.B.)

HISTORY

Late in 1978, the Commission approved the formation of a committee to study ways to make the transit system more accessible to the disabled and elderly. This was an internal TTC Committee and had representatives from major departments. It was formally named the Technical Advisory Committee on Improved Accessibility, however, it became known by the acronym TACIA.

Among the projects undertaken by TACIA was the acquisition and testing of a system that would automatically announce on board the train, both by audio means and visually, the name of each subway station. The system is meant to provide assistance to the hearing and visually disabled. It is realised that it could also prove helpful to all subway passengers.

Since there was no readily available system on the market, a prototype system was developed in-house and installed for test purposes on two subway cars.

DESCRIPTION

In this test special devices called "transponders" were installed between the rails. As the subway car passes over these devices the on-board computer equipment "communicates" with them through an antenna mounted beneath the subway car.

TEST PROJECT - SUBWAY TRAIN P.A. SYSTEM
AND AUTOMATIC STOP ANNOUNCEMENTS

The system operates in such a way that both an audible and visual announcement is made within the car as it approaches a station and again as the car enters the station. The equipment has proven very reliable during the test period.

EVALUATION

As part of the evaluation of the system, an on-board consumer response was conducted in 1983. Additionally, the organizations representing the hearing and visually disabled were asked to comment.

All replies from the disabled respondents were favourable and advocated the installation on all subway cars.

Most riders, contacted through the survey, agreed that the system should be expanded. However, approximately 60% of those surveyed felt that the system would be of benefit to them. Most recognized the particular value to those who were unfamiliar with the subway lines and to those with special needs.

Some letters, critical of the system, have also been received. Most complain on the basis of "invasion of privacy", however, some feel that the money could be better spent.

Department of Communications (DOC) approval for the installation was required. Although the DOC approved the installation on a test basis, they indicated that any permanent installation would require powered devices as energy transmission over air waves would not be acceptable. This will require developing a power source for the transponders. It is proposed to work on the development of such a device this year. Such work would be done in conjunction with other electrical work contained in the Operating Budget.

The estimated cost to install this system in the whole subway would be in the range of $3,000,000. Because of adjustments in the 1984 Capital and Capital Works Budgets, the TACIA projects have been postponed.

TEST PROJECT - SUBWAY TRAIN P.A. SYSTEM
AND AUTOMATIC STOP ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONCLUSIONS

The development of a suitable onboard Automatic Stop Announcement System has been achieved.

The Subway Train Automatic Stop Announcement System test has been terminated and permission is now sought to have the project placed "on hold" for consideration when funding is available.

7-54-10:2

THE COMMISSION RECEIVED THE FOREGOING REPORT FOR INFORMATION AND AUTHORIZED STAFF TO PLACE THE SUBWAY TRAIN AUTOMATIC STOP ANNOUNCEMENT SYSTEM "ON HOLD" FOR CONSIDERATION AT A LATER DATE.

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